

# SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —  
*Bonham, Texas*

## Post-Visit Guide

HS

### Overview: Rayburn's Leadership in Uncertain Times

Sam Rayburn, during his 48 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, played an influential part in the passing of some of the most influential legislation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this lesson, students will focus on his service and leadership during the uncertain times of the Great Depression, New Deal era, and World War II.

### United States History Studies Since 1877 TEKS

(2) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in U.S. history from 1877 to the present. The student is expected to:

- (C) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods; and
- (D) explain the significance of the following years as turning points: 1914-1918 (World War I), 1929 (the Great Depression begins), 1939-1945 (World War II), 1957 (Sputnik launch ignites U.S.-Soviet space race)

(24) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic. The student is expected to:

- (A) describe qualities of effective leadership

(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

- (A) use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions;
- (B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;
- (D) use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence;
- (H) use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons.

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## Materials

- Historical images
- WWII primary source resources
- *Mr. Sam, A Leader for the Times* resource

## Activity: Rayburn House Visit

10 minutes

Ask students to reflect on their visit to the Sam Rayburn House Historic Site by completing all columns of their **KWL chart**. Have students share their experiences including any new questions raised by the visit.

## Activity: Political Cartoon

10 minutes

Display the **political cartoon**. Tell students to study the drawing and answer the following questions:

- What is this political cartoon about? Who are the characters in the cartoon?
- Does the cartoonist have a personal opinion about the subject? How can you tell? [Point out the cartoonist's message and autograph in the lower righthand corner which reads: "To my good friend Rayburn who never says die? C.K. Berryman Evening Star July 30, 1939]
- How can political cartoons affect state or national opinion on a subject?

Discuss student answers. Tell students that in 1939, Rayburn had difficulty managing and organizing his fellow Democratic congressmen, many of whom had differing views. Under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal program, the federal government's reach grew farther and faster than it had ever done before. From 1931-1939, thirty-two new government agencies were created to lift America out of the Great Depression that had begun in 1929.

**Context:** Sam Rayburn was House Majority Leader January 3, 1937-September 16, 1940 and was unanimously elected the Speaker of the House in 1940. Just as he led his party through the final years of Roosevelt's New Deal, he would lead the House through the harrowing years of World War II, from the bombing of Pearl Harbor 1941 to the Japanese surrender in 1945.

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## Activity: Mr. Sam and Major Moments in WWII

30-40 minutes

In this activity, students will examine primary source documents to determine how each document relates to or helps address the following prompt:

**Consider the importance of voting and advocacy in a representative democracy. How might the actions of one leader, or a few leaders, impact the course of national history?**

Discuss the high level of responsibility required of U.S. congressmen during times of such gravity as during the WWI, the Great Depression, WWII, and the Civil Rights era. Sam Rayburn served and led throughout all these uncertain, crucial periods in history. Consider the characteristics required of a successful leader in uncertain times.

Divide the students into small groups. Distribute to each group at least one **primary source document (A-E)**. Each group will use the Document Analysis Organizer to gather evidence to support their answer to the prompt. Share responses.

## Activity: Mr. Sam, A Leader for Texas

20 minutes

In 1961, a book was published commemorating Rayburn's tenure as the longest serving Speaker of the House in history. Rayburn's colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, both Democrats and Republicans, shared their congratulations and compliments for his achievement.

Display or distribute the **photographs and transcribed messages** to Rayburn from various presidents, pointing out the bipartisan admiration. Then display or distribute **"The Rayburn Touch in Legislative Leadership"** handout and have students do a close-reading to answer the questions. Discuss student responses.

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- **What qualities made Sam Rayburn a successful leader?**  
[Answers may include the ability to identify with the everyday American, his selflessness, and his bold/creative but temperate exercise of power, understanding farm (rural) and urban toil]
- **Which state did Wright Patman represent?**  
[Texas. The introduction notes that Rayburn was a “fellow-Texan” of Patman]
- **Name the four acts noted by Rep. Patman as being important to Sam Rayburn’s legacy.**  
[Rural Electrification Act, Railroad Holding Company Act, Securities and Exchange Act, Federal Communications Act]
- **What issue was tackled by the 1944 bill described in Patman’s story?**  
[funding for farm to market roads]
- **Self-glorification is a temptation for many people serving in the public eye. Give examples from Rayburn’s life of how he chose to be a humble leader.**  
[Answer will vary but may include personally interacting with constituents, being aware of his public image and actions, investing in bipartisan collaboration, etc.]

## Assessment

Evaluate students’ final KWL charts and other learning artifacts for level of participation, completeness, and understanding.

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## A final word from Mr. Sam

**Citation:** United States. Congress. (87th, 1st session : 1961). House. *The Leadership of Speaker Sam Rayburn*, book, 1961; Washington D.C. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, [texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu)  
[texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht14386/m1/7/?q=sam%20rayburn%20letter](http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht14386/m1/7/?q=sam%20rayburn%20letter) (Accessed June 23, 2018).

**“I know our country is great—men and women have made it great. I have the faith to believe that the youth of this land and the great schools, the high schools, colleges, and universities of this land have within them the elements of good citizenship so that they will in the years to come preserve, protect, defend, and perpetuate the institutions of this, the mightiest, the freest, and the best government that has ever blessed human beings at any time or in any clime.”**



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## Activity Image: Political Cartoon

**Citation:** Berryman, Clifford Kennedy. Political Cartoon of Sam Rayburn, July 30, 1939, Washington D.C., University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, crediting Sam Rayburn House Museum. [texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph183527/](https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph183527/) (Accessed June 9, 2018).



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Graphic Organizer: Document Analysis

Document Analysis Organizer

INSTRUCTIONS: Use this table to organize evidence in each document.

Document Name & Date	Main Idea What is Happening?	What questions does this source inspire?	How does this document relate to the Prompt?

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## Activity Image: Primary Source A

**Citation:** Declaration of War Gavel, 1941, collection of U.S. House of Representatives, gift of Irving Swanson, <http://history.house.gov/Collection/Listing/2005/2005-124-000/> (Accessed 8/21/2018).

### Declaration of War Gavel

#### DATE

1941

#### DIMENSIONS

12 1/2 x 3 3/4 x 2 in. (31.8 x 9.5 x 5.1 cm)

#### ACCESSION NUMBER

2005.124.000

#### CREDIT LINE

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gift of Irving Swanson

#### OBJECT DETAILS

On December 11, 1941, the House approved a declaration of war against Axis Powers Germany and Italy—the same day that Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. Reading Clerk Irving Swanson read President Roosevelt's swift rejoinder requesting a declaration of war against both nations. Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn presented this gavel, used during this historic session, to Swanson in appreciation for reading Roosevelt's message and taking the roll call vote.



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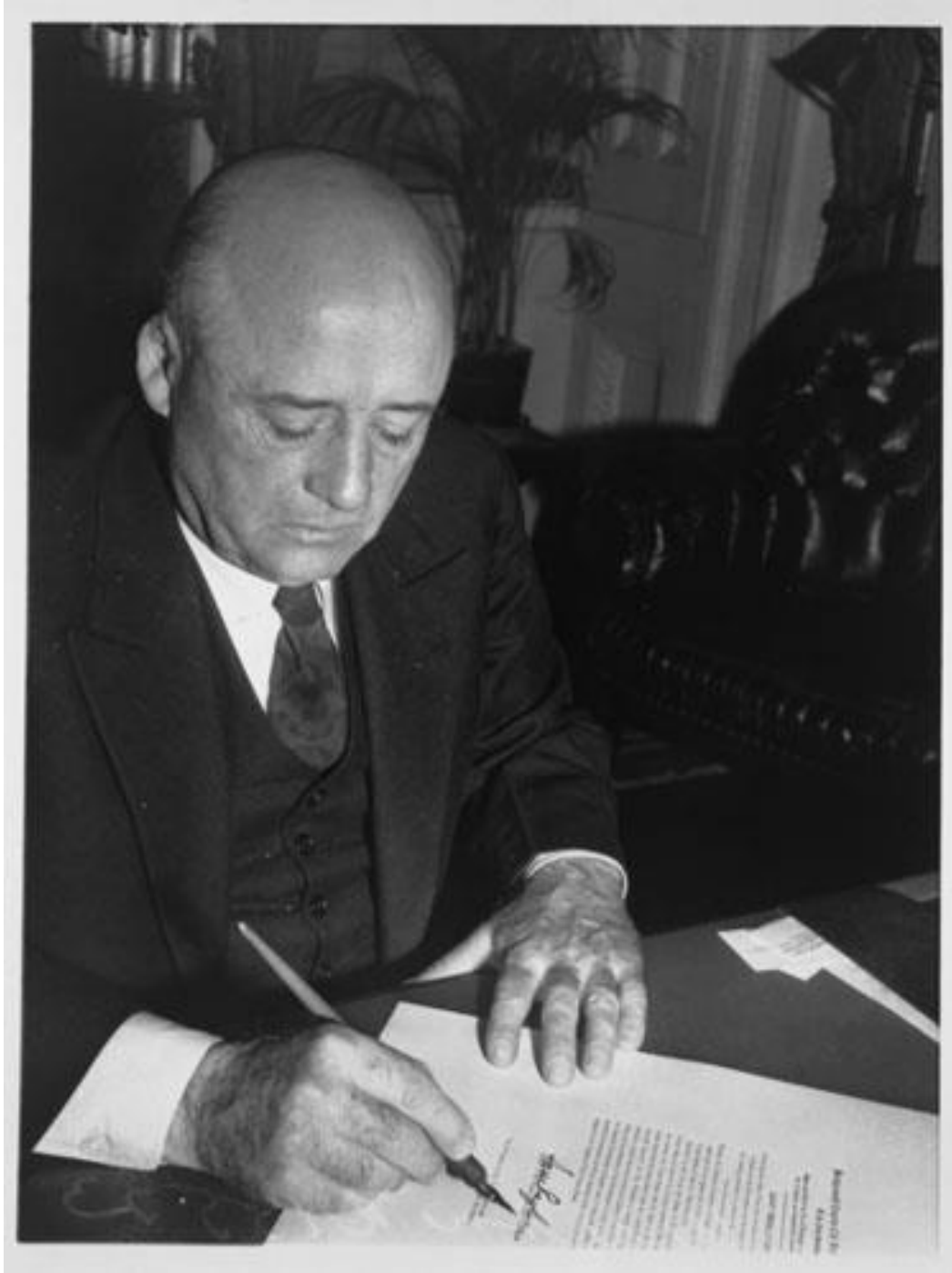
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## Activity Image: Primary Source B

**Citation:** Sam Rayburn signing joint resolution (war declaration), 1941, Washington, D.C., Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_02747](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_02747).



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## Activity

For Speaker Rayburn To a great Texan who has made his country, his party, and his time greater—with warm admiration

Lyndon B. Johnson

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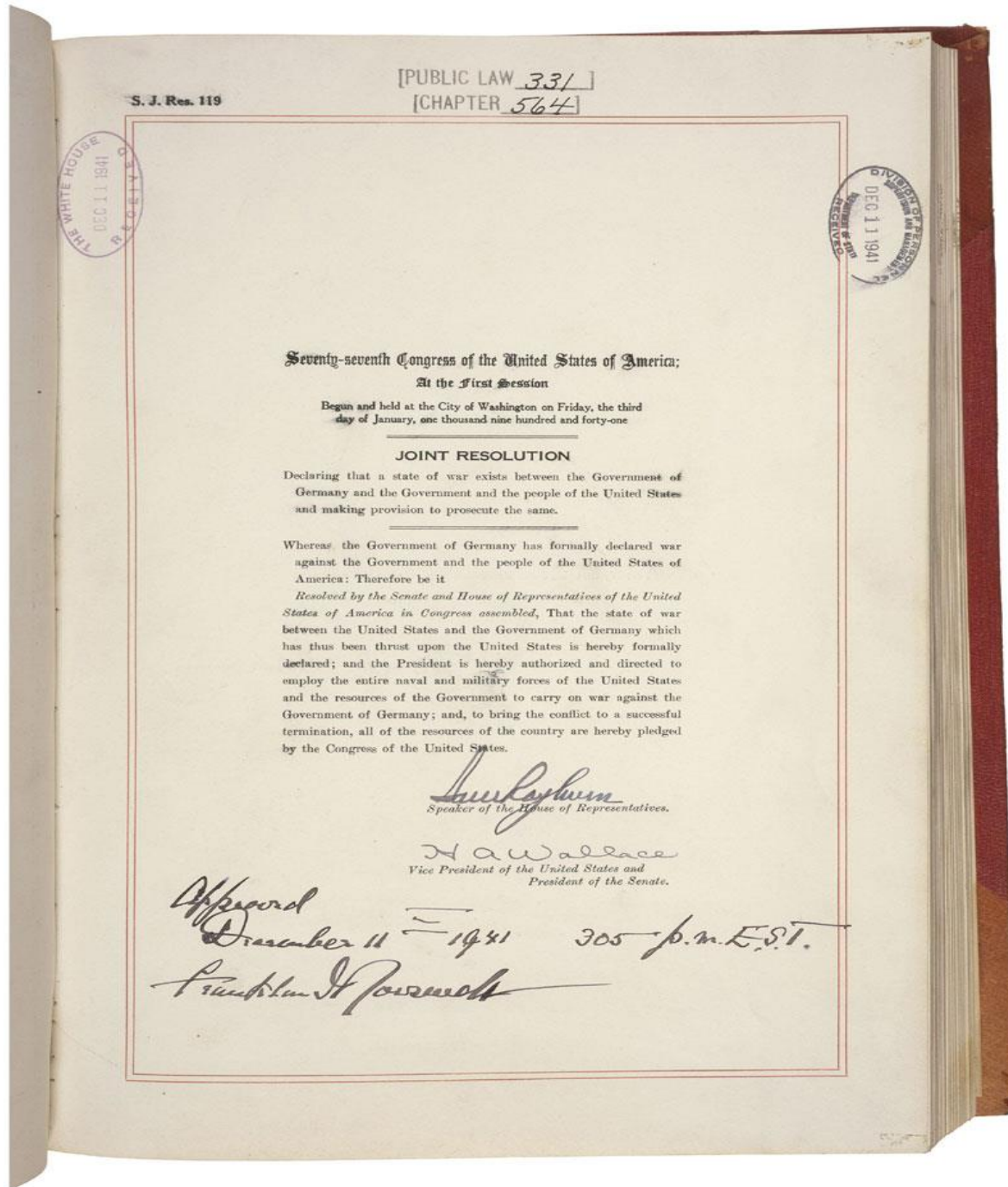
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## Image: Primary Source C

**Citation:** Joint Resolution of December 12, 1941, Public Law 77-331, 55 STAT 796, which declared war on Germany, 12/11/1941 ([National Archives Identifier: 299851](#)); Series: Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789 - 1996; General Records of the United States Government, 1778 - 1992; Record Group 11; National Archives and Records Administration.



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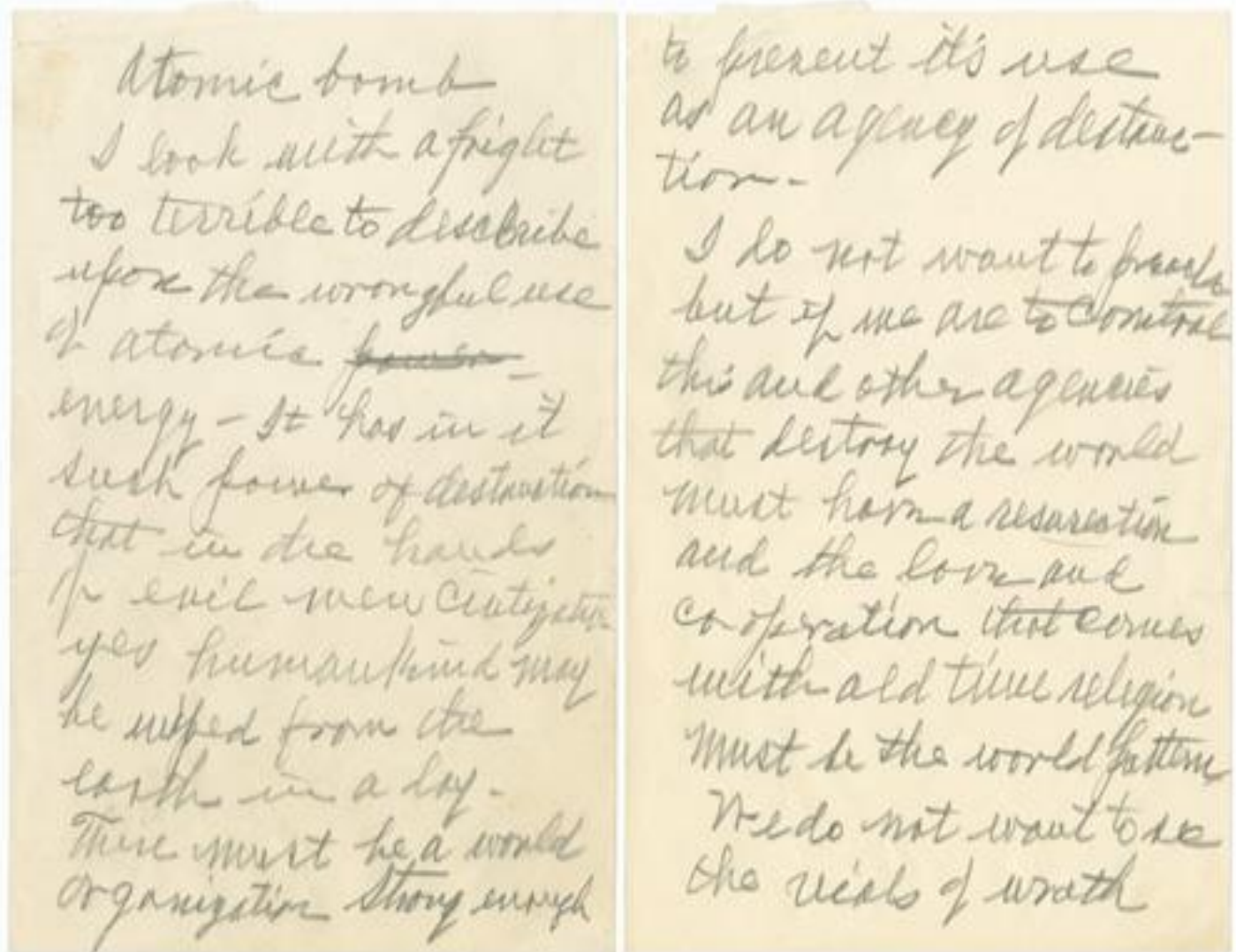
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## Activity Image: Primary Source D

**Citation:** Rayburn, Sam. Handwritten notes on the atomic bomb, 1941, Washington, D.C., Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_04642](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_04642).



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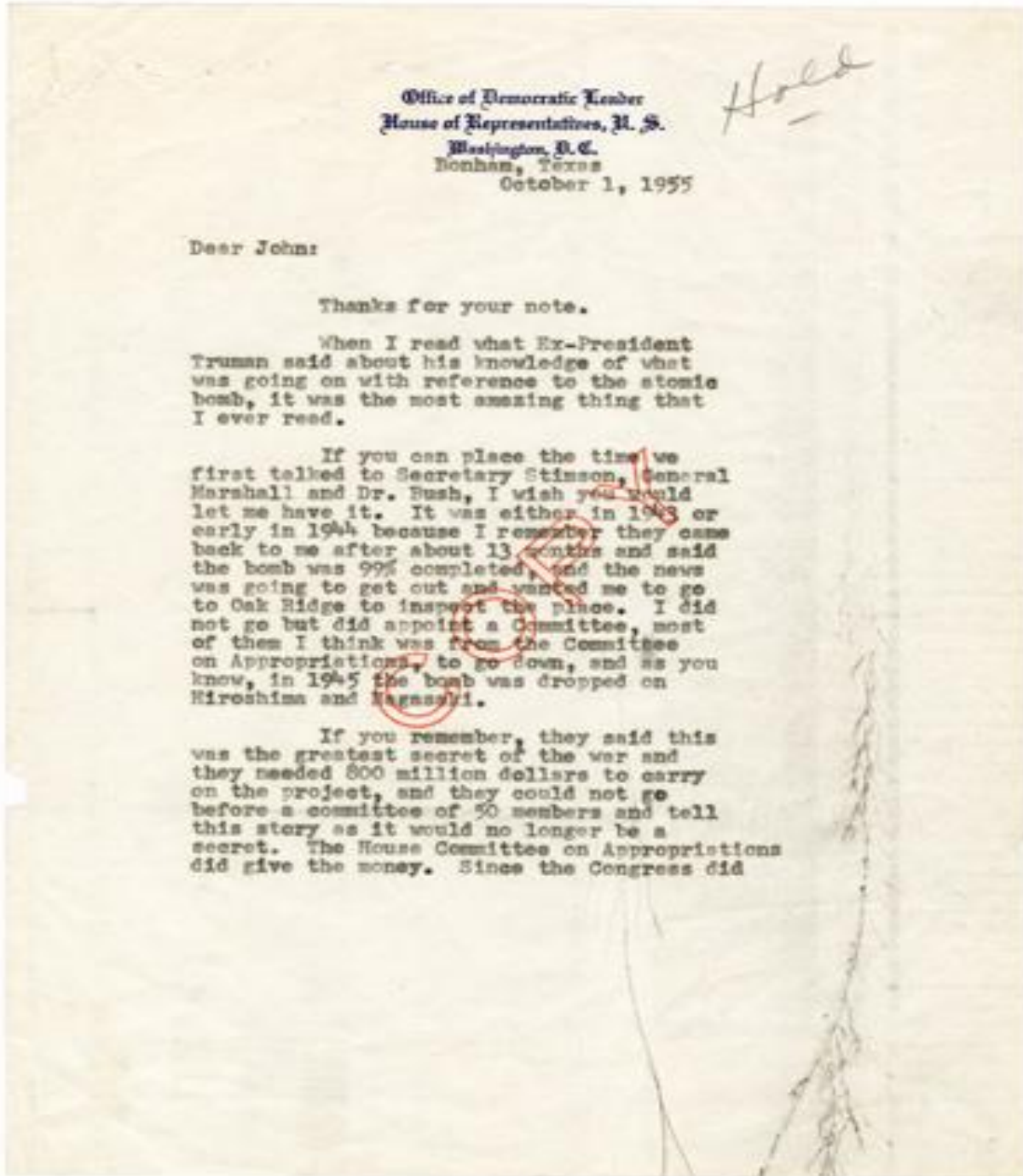
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## Activity Image: Primary Source E

**Citation:** Rayburn, Sam. Letter to John McCormack, October 1, 1951, Washington, D.C., Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_04630](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_04630).



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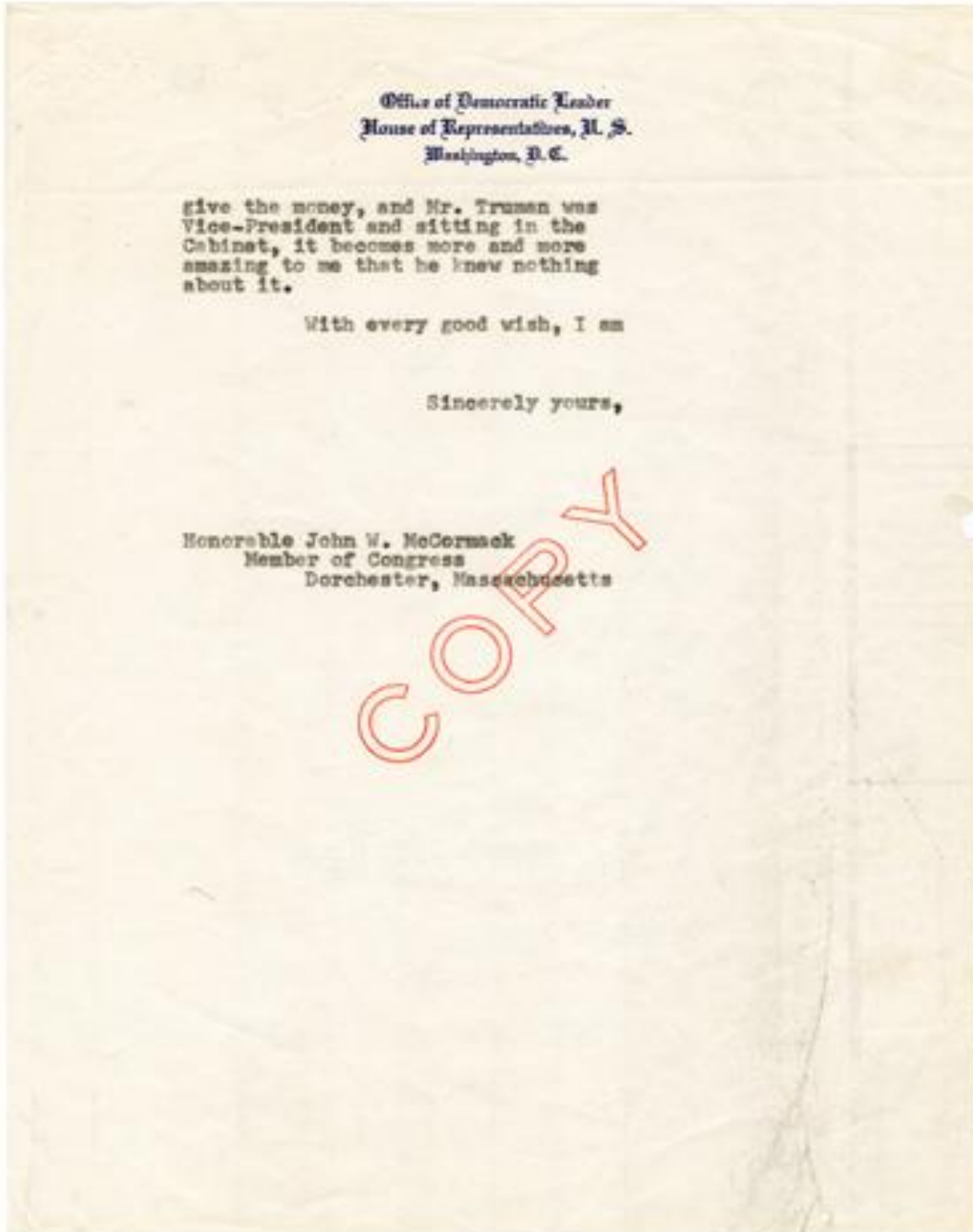
# SAM RAYBURN HOUSE

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## Activity Image: Primary Source E continued

**Citation:** Rayburn, Sam. Letter to John McCormack, October 1, 1951, Washington, D.C., Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_04630](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_04630).



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## Activity Image: FDR Tribute to Rayburn

**Citation:** Franklin D. Roosevelt, inscribed to Sam Rayburn, Washington DC, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990, [http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_02017](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_02017).



For Sam Rayburn with the affectionate  
regards of Franklin Roosevelt

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## Activity Image: LBJ Tribute to Rayburn

**Citation:** Moss Photo. [Photograph of Lyndon B. Johnson], Date unknown, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, crediting Sam Rayburn House Museum.

[texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph183489/m1/1/?q=rayburn%20lyndon%20johnson](http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph183489/m1/1/?q=rayburn%20lyndon%20johnson) (Accessed July 29, 2018).



For Speaker Rayburn  
To a great Texan who  
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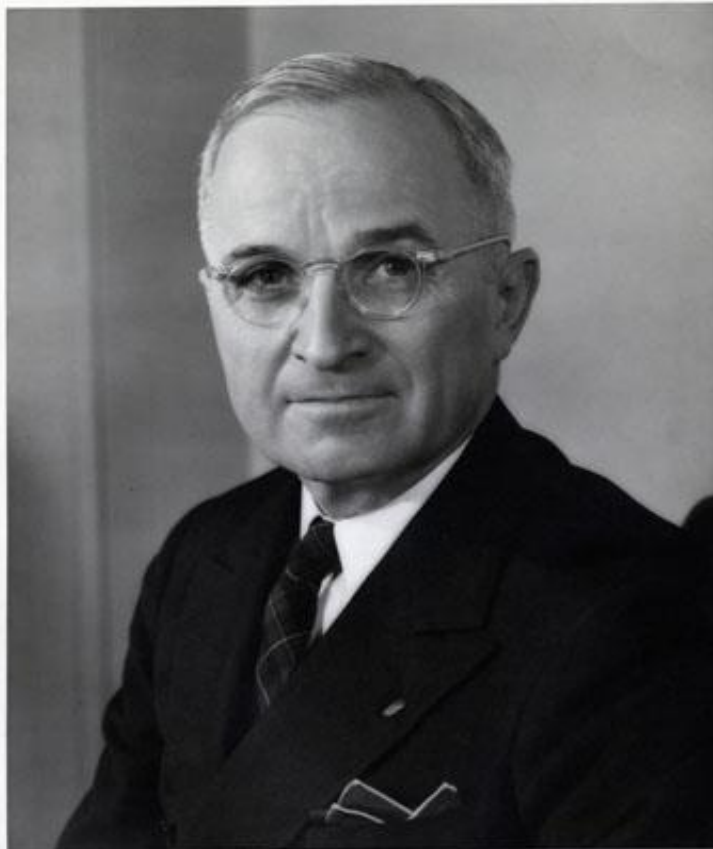
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## Activity Image: Truman Tribute to Rayburn

**Citation:** Harry Truman, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990,  
[http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_1g.php?variable=di\\_02013](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_1g.php?variable=di_02013).



To my good friend and good advisor,  
Sam Rayburn, with every good wish.

Harry Truman

*To my good friend and good advisor.  
Sam Rayburn, with every good wish.  
Harry Truman*

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## Activity Image: Eisenhower Tribute to Rayburn

**Citation:** Dwight D. Eisenhower, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990,  
[http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_02010](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_02010).



To - Speaker Sam Rayburn  
with best wishes and warm  
regards to a distinguished American -  
from one who was born in his  
Texas District  
Dwight D. Eisenhower

For Speaker Sam  
Rayburn With best  
wishes and warm regard  
to a distinguished  
American- From one  
who was born in his  
Texas district

Dwight D. Eisenhower

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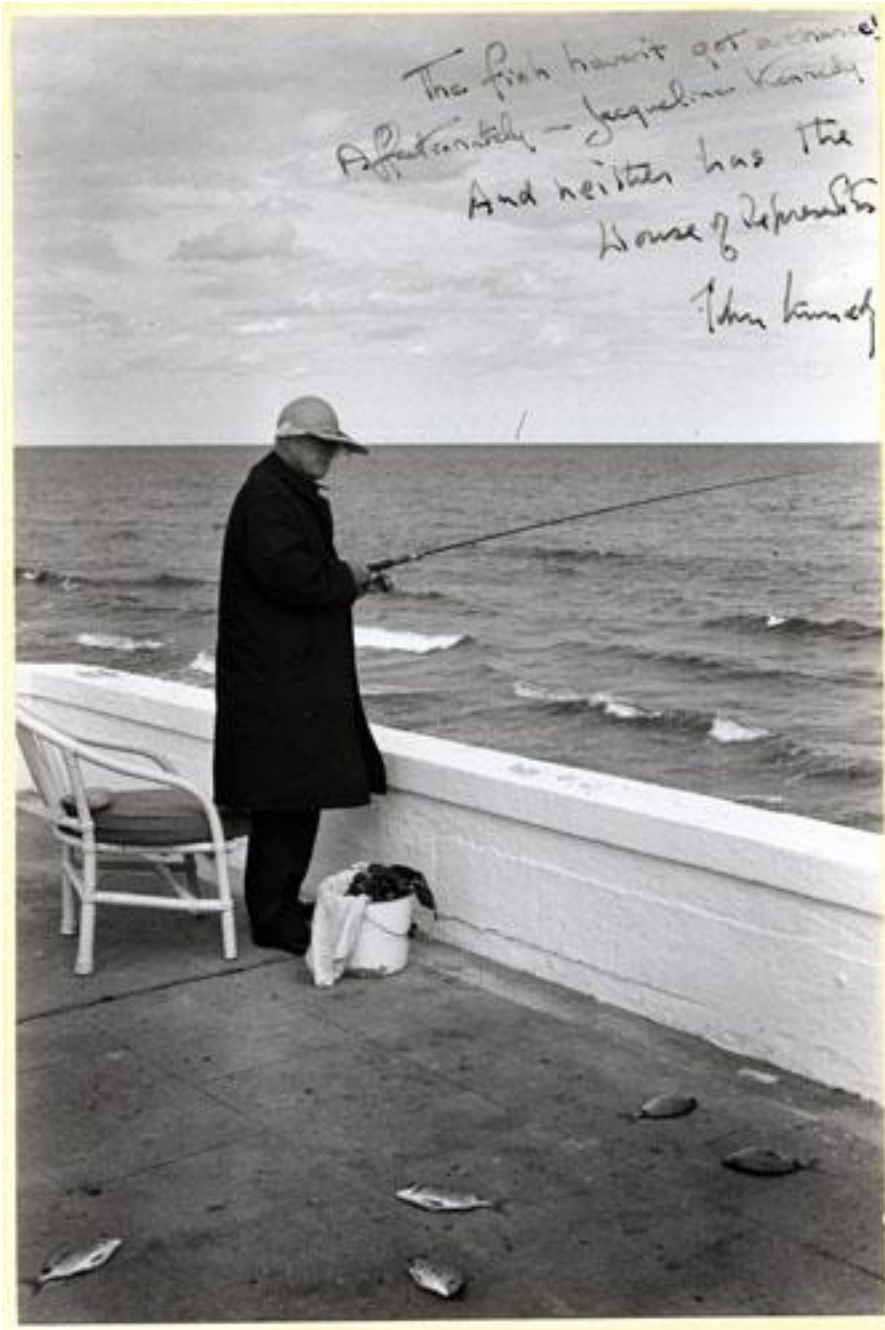
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## Activity Image: The Kennedys Tribute to Rayburn

**Citation:** Kennedy, Jacqueline. Sam Rayburn fishing, taken by Jacqueline Kennedy when speaker Rayburn met with President-elect Kennedy in Florida following the election, 1960, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990,

[http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image\\_lg.php?variable=di\\_02010](http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_02010).



The fish haven't got a chance!  
Affectionately—

Jacqueline Kennedy

And neither has the House of  
Representatives

John Kennedy

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## Activity Image: The Rayburn Touch in Legislative Leadership

**Citation:** United States. Congress. (87th, 1st session: 1961). House. *The Leadership of Speaker Sam Rayburn*, book, Washington D.C.: 1961. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, [texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu).

[texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph14386/m1/136/?q=sam%20rayburn%20letter](http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph14386/m1/136/?q=sam%20rayburn%20letter) (Accessed June 23, 2018).

### The Rayburn Touch in Legislative Leadership

This will be known in history as the Wright Patman story because it illustrates what the tributes in this book mean by the Speaker's legislative direction, his identity with the everyday American, his selflessness, and his bold and creative but temperate exercise of his enormous power. Representative Patman—who has known fellow-Texan RAYBURN intimately for a half century—tells it like this:

RAYBURN had known as a boy the backbreaking toil of the farm, as later experience taught him the needs of the urban toiler.

And so his heart and his effort went with the people.

If you ask what that means I answer:

It means, first of all from my standpoint, the Rural Electrification Act.

It means the Railroad Holding Company Act.

It means the Securities and Exchange Act.

It means the Federal Communications Act.

It means far and deep in RAYBURN's leadership the rightness of the Federal Government helping the farmer with farm-to-market roads.

I was in SAM RAYBURN's office in the Capitol in 1944.

Bill Robinson, of Utah, chairman of the House committee dealing with roads and highways, came in and asked Mr. RAYBURN to let him take up the highways bill.

RAYBURN asked: "What have they got in there for country roads?"

Bill Robinson said: "We don't have anything that's designated but we expect to have part of the authorized funds spent on secondary roads."

RAYBURN said: "Have your committee agree to an amendment that will earmark 30 percent of the funds for farm-to-market roads."

Robinson seemed to agree on the figure and RAYBURN said: "We will then take it up and pass it."

That day in 1944 that bill was agreed upon and shortly thereafter passed and its advantages have continued and are observable throughout the farm country down to this day.

There is, as you can see, little rhetoric involved in this kind of leadership, and less self-glorification.

But it was done.

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